

The Social Structure of a Mysore Village

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The author spent the greater part of 1948 making a field-study of Kodagahalli, a village about 22 miles from Mysore. The study was possible owing to the generosity of the University of Oxford which permitted him to spend the first year of his appointment as University Lecturer in Indian Sociology in making such a study. The following outline of an Indian village community is intended for the general reader.—Ed.

THERE are about 560 thousand villages in what is now Indian Union, and the bulk of the population of 357 millions live in these villages where the traditional mode of life still continues. But the villages have begun to change rapidly nowadays, and the pace of the change is likely to increase rather than decrease in the near future. This makes the field study of typical villages in the different linguistic areas of our country an urgent necessity. Either we collect the facts now, or they are lost forever.

The Indian village community has figured rather prominently in early sociological literature. Sir Henry Maine brought the Indian village community into prominence by making it the basis of his theory of primitive communism of property. Basing his theories on a certain type of village community existing in parts of North India, he argued that originally land, that is property, was owned jointly by kin-groups, and that individual ownership of land was a later phenomenon in the history of human societies. Attempts to reconstruct the history of social institutions were, fashionable in the latter half of the 19th century. Social anthropology or comparative sociology is a more mature subject today, and consequently social anthropologists are more modest than their Victorian predecessors. They either attempt to describe the structural features of a small society which they have studied intensively for two or three years, or compare similar institutions in a few neighbouring societies.

We may note briefly one or two general points about village communities all over India, before proceeding to give an outline of this village community in Mysore. Earlier writers like Maine distinguished between two types of villages in India—the 'joint' and the 'severalty'. The first type prevails in the N.W.F.P., the Punjab, and the UP, and the second in Peninsular and Central India. The latter type existed in Bengal and Bihar before the introduction

of Permanent Settlement in 1793. The 'joint' type may further be sub-divided into the *pattidari* and the *zamindari* sub-types, in both of which the village, lands constitute the joint property of an organised proprietary body. But while in the *pattidari* system the joint families constituting the proprietary body own separate, shares in the cultivable land and hold the waste and pasture lands in common, in the *zamindari* system all land is held and managed in common, and not divided. In the latter sub-type, the tenants, if any, are the tenants of the whole body of proprietors, their rents and other receipts are paid into a common fund from which the common expenses are met; and the annual profits are divided among the co-sharers according to their respective shares. In a 'joint' village, there are two classes of men, one with proprietary rights, the other without them, power resting exclusively with the former.

In the 'severalty' or *ryotwari* village, a type which prevailed over the greater part of India, the unit for land revenue is not the village, but the holding of each cultivator, which is separately assessed, and each cultivator is individually responsible for its payment. There is no waste land held in common which can be divided if required for cultivation, though there may be common rights of use in the waste, e.g., for grazing and collecting fuel.

A feature of the village community all over India is the *panchayat* or council of elders which decides disputes between villagers, and discusses matters of common interest like holding a festival, building a temple or road, etc.

The nature of the village community is much better realised if we disregard for a moment the development of communications and the increase of administrative centralisation the revenue, police, law courts, etc. of the last 150 years or more. Before this, the village communities were far more isolated than they are today. A man's effective contacts and relations, one imagines, normally stopped a few miles from his natal vil-

lage. A distant pilgrimage or a journey to a cattle fair, were probably the only occasions when an individual ventured beyond the range of his normal contacts. Even then, he was often accompanied by his friends and relatives, Groups, of relatives and friends moved a considerable distance only when there were compelling reasons like a famine, war, or religious persecution by a prince professing a different faith.

The overall political authority does not seem to have been much more than a tax-collecting body in its relations to these villages. As long as a village paid its taxes and no great crime was committed in it, it was allowed to go its own way. If we exclude for a moment the hereditary headman of the village and the hereditary accountant who are primarily members of the village community discharging certain duties for the government, officials of the government rarely visited the village. The elders in Kodagahalli told me that even as recently as fifty years ago a policeman was a rare sight in their village, only 22 miles from the capital of the State of Mysore. (Formerly every village had its own watch and ward, and this continues in certain villages even today.)

Nobody can fail to be impressed by the isolation and stability of these village communities. Some of the early British administrators have left us their impressions of the village community. Sir Charles Metcalfe wrote in 1832 :

"The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution . . . , but the village community remains the same. . . . This union of village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India,

through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence."

Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1832, Vol. III, Appendix 84, page 331.

All over India, excluding Bengal, Assam and parts of the West Coast of Southern India, the village is a cluster of houses and huts with the fields all round. Narrow, uneven, winding streets run between rows of houses, thatched, or roofed with tiles made presumably by the local potter. The village occupies a very restricted area—Kodagaballi is a somewhat large village, containing 1,503 inhabitants and yet one can go round it in about half an hour.

Every villager knows most of the other members of the village. Everyone belongs to a caste, is a member of a joint family, and of the agnatic kin-group which is made up of a few joint families. A man's idiosyncracies are common property. Adults are aware of the "history" of almost every joint

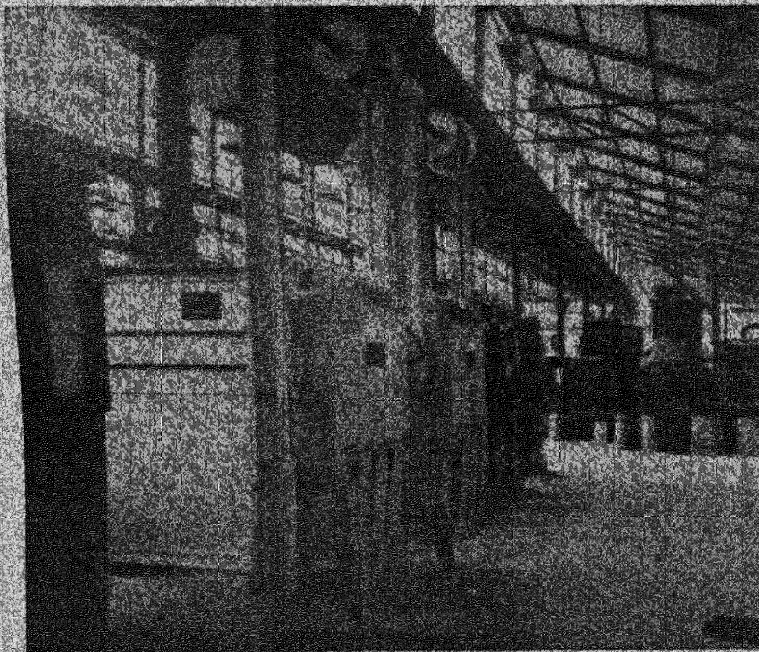
family in the village. A relation between two persons seems to be a continuity from a relationship between their parents, and leads to a relationship between their children. One occasionally comes across instances where past animosity between two joint families acts as a bond between their present representatives.

The headman of the village, commonly called the *Patel*, and the accountant, *Shankhog*, are key figures in the community. They both belong to the village and their offices are hereditary. The headman is usually a non-Brahmin, whereas the accountant is invariably a Brahmin. The headman represents the village to the Government and *vice versa*. His dual position of agent of the Government and representative of his village gives him the respect of all. He is an indispensable go-between. While the Government regards him as one who can be held responsible for the village, to the villagers he is their spokesman. Till recently, the government seems to have been regarded with awe by the villagers. Only the boldest seem to have remained in the village when a high government official visited it—

perhaps such a visit was undertaken only when something was seriously wrong in the village. The need of a spokesman is better appreciated when we remember these facts.

The accountant keeps a register of how much land each head of a family or joint family has, and the amount of tax on the land. Just before harvest the accountant reports to the government the state of the crops. He usually sends his report in the form, "the harvest will be 8 as in the rupee this year." The government's assessment will be adjusted to this estimate, after the accountant's estimate has been checked by a higher official.

The village is a unity in several senses of the term. It is, firstly, a physical unity. If the monsoon fails, it fails for everyone. Formerly, when there was an attack of cholera or plague or small-pox, the entire village acted as one, and moved away to a different place. (The present site of Kodagaballi is only seventy years old, the old site having been abandoned during an epidemic of malaria). They all joined together to propitiate the deities preading over these diseases.



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The disease was ritually driven out of the village—the village boundary had a certain ritual significance.

This ritual unity of the village is important. During the early part of the summer of 1948 there was a long drought and this adversely affected the summer crops, horse gram, black gram, green gram, etc. The villagers felt that they were being punished by God. Some attributed the drought to the fact that the priest of the Basava temple, an old widower, was living with two women to whom he was not married. The rains are liable to fail for other reasons too: burial of a leper's corpse leads to defilement of Mother Earth (*Bhumitai*) and this results in a drought. A leper's corpse has to be cremated or floated down a river.

There was a striking demonstration of village unity during my stay. The government suddenly passed an order that fishing rights in tanks all over the state should be sold by auction. When Kodagahalli people learnt of it, their spontaneous reaction was "What right has the government to auction fishing rights in *our* tank?" The government was, according to them, encroaching on something that belonged to them. (It must be mentioned here that in Kodagahalli, once every year, during the height of summer, when water is at the lowest, the headman and elders organise a fishing expedition. At night, by moonlight, most of the adults go with fishing baskets to the tank and catch fish. Next day there is a feast in every house). On the day fixed for auction, the villagers saw to it that nobody in the village or from any of the neighbouring villages was there to bid. The visiting government official had to return without an auction.

This sense of unity is also usually seen when the villagers contrast themselves with others. Kodagahalli people think themselves refined compared to Sihalli people. They concede that Arakere people are more educated than themselves, but they say that they are quarrelsome, and do not co-operate with others for constructive tasks. On the other hand, Arakere people regard themselves as advanced and consider Kodagahalli backward. Pride in one's village is very common though this does not completely shut out objectivity.

Occasionally we find two villages fighting each other. There is a Madeswara (a form of Shiva) temple two furlongs from Kodaga-

haili, and every year, in the month of *Kartik* (October-November) there is a festival in honour of this deity. People from within a radius of about twenty miles come to this festival. Parties of devotees from surrounding villages come and carry an image of the deity round the temple. It is customary to allow each party to carry the image three times round the temple. In 1947 a party from Arakere was intercepted by a party from Sihalli soon after the former had completed the second round. Arakere people said they wanted to complete the three rounds. Sihalli people replied that a great many people were waiting, and there was no time for the customary three rounds. A fight ensued, in which an Arakere youth was injured. Soon Arakere people massed up for a fight, and started moving towards Kodagahalli. The police then intervened, fired a few rounds in the air, and were able to prevent the fight from assuming serious proportions.

Sihalli people felt uncomfortable after the festival was over. They knew that Arakere people would try to avenge themselves. So they wanted to come to a settlement (*raji*). They reported their desire for settlement to the headmen of Kodagahalli and Bannur—in the latter is an important *pane hayat* for the settlement of disputes. Arakere¹ people were asked to be present, in Bannur on a certain day for the settlement of the dispute. They refused to comply with the request. Arakere has a *pavchayat* of the same standing as Bannur, and Arakere people thought that it was a slight for them to be summoned to Bannur. Finally it was agreed that the parties concerned should meet in the Madeswara temple itself. They met at last, and the battle took a legal turn. It was finally decided that Sihalli people had committed a wrong, and they reluctantly paid the fine imposed on them. They then went back to their village and fined heavily all the youths who had taken part in the fight. At both Arakere and Sihalli, people were informed of the end of the dispute by beat of drum, with a stern warning that anyone who did not heed the decision would be summarily dealt with by the village *panchayat*.

We have said enough to show that the unity of the village has several aspects. Most members of the village, whatever their caste, consider themselves to be *villagers*

in certain contexts. There are 16 sub-castes in Kodagahalli. Each of these sub-castes has a distinctive tradition with strong ties with the same sub-caste in villages nearby. That is, the village is a vertical unity of many castes whereas caste is a horizontal unity, its alliances going beyond the village.

There is one aspect of the caste system which does not receive sufficient emphasis. All the various castes in a village are interdependent. This is seen in day-to-day matters, and is prominent on ritual and other important occasions. Any villager will tell, for instance, that at the wedding of a peasant, all the castes have to co-operate. The Brahmin is priest, the carpenter puts up the *pandal*, the goldsmith makes the ornaments, the potter makes the pots, the washerman supplies clean cloths for the bridal pair to walk on, the barber shaves the groom, the oil-presser supplies the oil for the lamps and cooking, the shepherd provides wool for the sacred thread which is tied round the wrists of the bridal pair, Banajigas (traders) supply the provisions, the Medas (basket-makers) the baskets, and the Holeva (untouchable) performs menial tasks and makes a pair of sandals for the groom.

The carpenter (he belongs to the caste of carpenters and blacksmiths, it is important to remember) makes the peasant's plough and it is his duty to see that the peasant's agricultural implements are all in good repair. Each family he serves pays him annually a fixed amount of paddy and straw at the rice harvest. He also gets a share—a very small one, though in the grains that are grown during summer. The washerman similarly washes the clothes of every family in the village, except of families U'longing to very low castes. The men of the washerman's family wash the men's clothes, while the women members wash the women's clothes. A man considers it beneath him to wash a woman's clothes'. The washerman also has special duties and privilege's on ritual occasions. He is paid annually in paddy and straw by every family he serves. The same holds good for the potter and barber.

The oil-presser does not seem to be included in such traditional arrangements. The Brahmin and Lingayat (non-Brahmin, Shaivite sect of South India) priests of the three important temples in Kodagahalli are also paid a small quantity

of paddy and straw annually. It must be mentioned here, that each of these temples has been endowed with lands which the priestly families enjoy. The paddy and straw which they are paid in addition is said to be a contribution towards the daily rice-offerings to the deities.

Formerly, in Kodagahalli, it was customary for two families, one belonging to the upper caste and the other to the untouchable caste, to be linked in a master-servant relationship. The servant was called the *halemaga* (old son) of the master. The servant family had certain duties on ritual and social occasions: e.g., at a wedding in the master's family the servant had to present a pair of sandals (*chemmalige*) to the bridegroom. The servant family was paid a quantity of paddy and straw at the harvest. In addition, it had the right to the carcass of any cow or bullock which died in the master's house.

Nowadays, untouchables are beginning to refuse to perform these and other tasks which are considered to be degrading. But the upper castes want them to continue performing them, and there is friction.

Formerly, it seems that entire sub-castes occupying a very low position in the hierarchy were attached as *halemagas* to certain sub-castes occupying a high position relatively. Thus we find a man of a high caste saying that "formerly such-and-such a sub-caste were *halemagas* to us. They are no longer so." Sometimes this relationship seems to have been purely nominal—as when a wandering sub-caste like the *Garudigas* (caste of acrobats and magicians) are *halemagas* to a sub-caste in a village. The *Garudigas* might visit this particular village once a year only. Sometimes a man might claim a sub-caste higher than his own as *halemaga* in order to boost his own sub-caste.

Servants cultivating their master's lands are paid in paddy or paddy-money, and tenants pay their landlords a certain share of the crop. Paddy occupies to a large extent the place of money in the economy, and barter is even today common in individual transactions.* Hut money is being used more and

more.

The village is even today largely self-sufficient. But nowadays there is a need for goods made or grown outside the village: clothes, salt, sugar, matches, kerosene, soap, tea, coffee, *beedis*, lanterns, cycles and safes are some of the goods that come from outside. A self-sufficient economy is possible only if each sub-caste adheres to its traditional occupation. The occupations are complementary. This is true to a great extent in Kodagahalli even today, though that every caste has agriculture either as its main occupation, or practises agriculture along with its main occupation. The members of the peasant caste practise agriculture, the barber shaves, the washerman washes clothes, the potter makes pots, the Banajiga trades, the Ganga works the oil-press and sells oil, the Besthas are fishermen, the Idigas sell toddy, though they no longer tap it, the Mr das make baskets and the Koramas are swineherds. The untouchables are labourers and servants.

But most of the Kurahas are agriculturists though their traditional occupation is keeping sheep and making woollen blankets. There are a few Muslims in Kodagahalli who are recent immigrants, and they are traders and contractors.

A few peasants and a Lingayat have opened grocery shops, and a potter and a fisherman sew clothes on a sewing machine¹. The priestly castes also cultivate their lands. It is even today considered a proper thing to follow one's traditional occupation. (This view, however, does not obtain among many of the younger people who have been to school and who are urban in their outlook.)

A caste has a ritualist attitude towards the tools, implements or objects associated with its occupation. Annually, at the festival of Gauri (Parvati, wife of Shiva), each caste worships its tools. Books are identified with Saraswati, the goddess of learning, and everyone has ritual respect for them. The Brahmins worship books during the Dassera. It is customary to perform Saraswati Puja in the village school.

The entire community, composed of all the Hindu castes, regard the earth as Mother Earth, and the crops and manure are regarded as Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. The domestic lamp, granary, a heap of grain, a grain-measure, etc., are

all objects of ritual respect.

The various sub-castes in a village are interdependent economically and otherwise, and they see themselves as villagers in certain contexts, but these do not prevent inter-caste rivalry and even hostility. This is the natural corollary of caste solidarity. Intercaste rivalry expresses itself in joking about the customs and habits of the castes of which one is not a member. Along with a pride in one's own caste, there goes an ignorance of, and often contempt for, the ways and customs of other castes. The upper castes tend to be specially contemptuous of the ways of the lower castes.

Occasionally there are fights between sub-castes. Recently Besthas and Lingayats fought each other in a village near Kodagahalli. Both Besthas and Lingayats are credited with a great deal of caste-solidarity.

There are villages in which stones have been planted to mark the boundary of a caste. A man who finds himself on the wrong side of the boundary might be beaten. It is necessary to mention here—even though it means digressing—that there is another type of solidarity besides those of kinship, caste and village. The various sub-castes in a village are grouped into two divisions, viz., *Nadu* and *Desha*. It is not very easy to discover which sub-castes belong to the *Nadu* division and which to the *Desha*. One version is that Brahmins, Kshatras and Okkaligas belong to the *Nadu* division, whereas all the castes which usually have the suffix Shetti (from Sanskrit "Sreshti", elect) belong to the *Desha* division. Thus the Banajiga, Agasta (Madivala), Kumbara, Ganiga, Hajama, Bestha, weaving castes, Medas and Koramas belong to the *Desha*. It is thus seen that all the trading and artisan castes belong to the *Desha* division. The Okkaligas certainly belong to the *Nadu*, but one is not so certain about the Brahmin and Kshatras. Perhaps the Brahmin was extraneous to the village in this matter, as he certainly is in some others.

It is relevant to introduce another matter here: the smith group of castes are said to have 'one colour less' than the others. Formerly this group suffered from certain civic disabilities. Their weddings could not be performed inside the village. They were excluded from village assemblies, prayer parties and marriage houses. They were not allowed to wear red slippers. No other caste, not even

* The role of barter has increased, in certain spheres, in the post-war years which have been characterised by acute shortage of rice. Vegetable sellers refuse cash and sell only for rice.

the Holey, the right-hand division of the untouchable caste, dined at the house of a smith. It is usual to say that the Holey is the lowest caste. But there are castes to which the Holey does point and say that he does not eat food cooked by them, or drink water given by them, or even borrow chunam (lime paste for betel leaves).

An attempt by the smiths to assert their equality with the other castes led to a fight between them and others. Fifty years ago the *Cheluvadi* (untouchable, hereditary servant of the village, belonging to right-hand division) of Arakere village beat a wealthy smith from Mysore who walked into the village wearing red slippers. The smith had lent money to the extent of Rs. 50,000 to the villagers.

Perhaps the grouping of castes into those "with full colours" and those "with one colour less" coincides with the grouping of castes into right-hand and left-hand divisions. The smiths certainly belong to the latter. Of the untouchables, the Holey as belong to the right-hand, while the Madigas belong to the left-hand division. Formerly, a fight usually arose when a left-hand caste tried to assert a privilege which was denied to it by the right-hand division.

The village has a solidarity even though corn posed of several different castes. Each caste again has a solidarity cutting across the village. Thirdly, the various castes living in a village can be grouped into *Nadu* and *Desha* divisions. This distinction, like the "with full colours" and "one colour less" division, and the right-hand and left-hand division, is a general distinction between castes and is not confined to the castes of one village. In even village one finds castes belonging to the right- and left-hand divisions, "full colours" and "one colour less" divisions, and *Nadu* and *Desha* divisions.

We must now mention the existence of caste-courts, which punish people guilty of caste offences. They are even today powerful organisations though the legal system introduced by the British has well-nigh broken them. For instance, a person who has been excommunicated by a caste-court can sue it in a court of law for defamation. Theoretically, the caste-court has been more or less declared illegal.

But actually it functions vigorously. Even as recently as 1945, there was an instance of a woman of the washerman caste who was very nearly thrown out of cash; because of alleged inter-dining with a sister who had been thrown out of caste sometime previously for living with an untouchable. Excommunication from caste is the most powerful weapon in the hands of the caste-courts. It can be final and irrevocable, or temporary. The former

is for very grave offences like living with a very low caste man, or eating with him. The milder punishment is for smaller offences: the offender expresses regret for his action, pays a fine, undergoes purificatory ritual after which he gives a feast to the members of his caste. When one is excommunicated for good, he is as good as dead to his caste which stops all social intercourse with him. A notice is often circulated which makes it impossible

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for the wretched man to settle elsewhere. If the offender is the head of a family, the entire family comes under the ban, unless they disown him.

At a wedding, betel leaves and nuts are distributed to all the guests assembled. This distribution has to take place in a certain order. It has to take into account the qualifications of each guest. The wedding guests are very touchy on the question of precedence, and if a guest feels that he has been dishonoured, he creates a scene. The formal distribution of betel leaves is such a hazardous affair, that several years ago the elders of Kodagahalli decided that anybody could drop it if he paid Rs. 8-40 into the village fund. Nowadays most take advantage of this escape.

There are caste-courts for the potters at Keragodu and Ashtagrama. These courts are called *gadi* which literally means frontier or boundary. Each caste has several caste-courts and they are said to constitute a hierarchy. But the hierarchy does not seem to be clearly defined. For instance, there is a keen rivalry between Keragodu *gadi* and Mysore *gadi*. The Mysore people claim precedence over Keragodu on the ground that they represent the *gadi* of the capital of Mysore State. To this the Keragodu people reply that these *gadis* came into existence during the time of Hyder Ali, father of Tipu Sultan; and even then Keragodu had precedence over Ashtagrama, the then capital of Mysore State that is to say, Keragodu has always enjoyed precedence over the capital.

Two years ago, representatives of the potter caste in Mysore started claiming precedence over Keragodu representatives in villages like Arakere, Pura, Kadlagala, etc. In none of the places did they have any success. But in Tagadur *gadi* they were successful in pressing their claim.

Again, Arakere *gadi* claims to include under it Keragodu *gadi*, but the latter considers itself to be a separate *gadi* and not merely part of Arakere. It is said that formerly potters had 48 *gadis*, and at a wedding in a potter's house, 48 betels had to be kept aside, irrespective of the fact that only a few of the 48 representatives were present. In Arakere village, this custom was stopped only a few years ago, and nowadays only those actually present receive betel leaves.

The ritual of betel distribution at a wedding reflects the village organisation, and also reveals the existence of a hierarchy of caste-courts. Sometimes the hierarchy is not very clearly defined and one of the reasons for this may be the fact that a caste-court which is supreme in one area tries to assert its authority in a different area. This would reveal that the process of unification had not been carried sufficiently far.

Certain matters fall very clearly within the jurisdiction of a caste-court, e.g., dining or living with a member of low caste. Matters like lopping off the branches of someone else's tree, diverting water-belonging to another Held, stealing grass from a field, setting fire to hay-ricks, etc., fall within the jurisdiction of village authorities who are armed with powerful sanctions, ranging from fines to boycott of the offender. The offender who has been boycotted (and his family) lose access to the village tank or canal. His cattle will not be allowed to graze on the village pasture. The barber, washerman, etc., will not serve him. No neighbour will offer "fire and hot water". Even today in the village it is common to light a stove from the embers taken from a neighbour's stove. Similarly, hot water for bathing or washing is borrowed from a neighbour if the neighbour has a cauldron full of boiling water.

The village and caste authorities normally work together. Sometimes the former may tell the disputants, "We don't like to interfere in this case. It is much better if you took this matter up to your caste authorities." Again, the caste-authorities consult the village authorities when a question of fact is involved—the latter are the men on the spot and know the parties to, and sometimes the facts as well of, the dispute.

In Kodagahalli, as far as the Okkaligas (peasants, 735 of them) are concerned, there is a caste headman (Nadu Gauda) in the village to whom they can take their disputes. The village headman (Patel) is also an Okkaliga, and he and the village headman are great friends. Each supports the other in almost all matters. The result is that disputes from Kodagahalli Okkaligas rarely go out of the village. In fact, Kodagahalli people are well-known for their love of peace.

Both the village headman and

the headman of the Okkaliga caste are well-to-do, and have a reputation for being fair-minded. This normally ensures the settling of disputes within the village. Also, the two headmen refrain from trying to exercise their authority in disputes in which certain people well-known for their quarrelsomeness are involved. The latter take their disputes to the law courts.

The headman of the Okkaliga caste in Kodagahalli is normally called in to settle disputes of non-Okkaligas, disputes which clearly lie within the jurisdiction of respective caste authorities. For instance, the case of a Kuraba (shepherd) girl of Kodagahalli who did not want to join her husband away, was taken before the Okkaliga caste headman. The reputation of a leader for fairness often might induce people of other castes to take their disputes to him.

Every political leader and every official who comes into direct contact with villagers, complains about "party politics" in the village. Every village is divided into factions; and each faction headed by a leader. These factions are preventing the working of the village as a unit.

The village is an interdependent unit, economically self-sufficient, having its own village assembly, watch and ward, officials and servants. Inside each village each caste lives its own life, though it is dependent on other castes within and without the village. There is also a division along class lines. The untouchables are never wealthy, and they are usually servants and labourers at the houses of the upper castes. But there are also poor members of the upper castes who act as servants to rich members of their own caste. Thus a poor Okkaliga often becomes the servant of a rich Okkaliga. Usually an upper caste man never becomes a servant at the house of a man who belongs to a much lower caste.

We have said enough to indicate the kind of ties that bind together the members of the village community. These ties are strong and traditional. But the forces set in motion in the last 150 years have been such as to weaken them, and the arrival of Independence has marked a concentrated effort to snap these ties. What kind of village community will come to exist in the future can only be a matter for speculation.